



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

May—June 2020

The original period of isolation recommended for vulnerable adults or those shielding them was due to end in early to mid-June. At the moment, that forecast seems rather optimistic but it's essential that the country doesn't ease itself back to 'normality' too quickly. The other day I was asked for our meeting dates for next year; let's hope those that I sent through will happen.

I'm pleased to have received some positive feedback to our last newsletter and the idea, in the absence of having a speaker at our meetings, of having a monthly focus. This issue is the first part of our focus 'Keeping in touch'. So many of us have been missing seeing our loved ones; they may be at the other end of the country, they may be just a few streets away, but at the time I am writing this, we still can't see them, let alone give them a hug. Top marks to Antony Cauvin from Stratford who invented the 'Cuddle Curtain'. Did you see it on the news? Our ability to see each other and touch each other is so much a part of being a human being.

The second week of June is Carers Week, organised by Carers UK. The theme this year is 'Making Caring Visible'. Normally, there would be lots of events organised all over the country, from information events to carers' treats. Sadly, plans have had to be curtailed and, although it is hoped local press and radio will carry stories, most of what the County Council will offer will be on Social Media. There will be a printed leaflet for carers which will be distributed by any providers seeing clients face to face. The Council's Support for Carers website carries COVID 19 information and details of support available at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/carers. Why not check out details of the "virtual cuppa" available each day for carers to meet at <https://www.mobiliseonline.co.uk/cuppa>.



WELCOME

This month we extend a warm welcome to readers from the Leamington branch of the Parkinson's UK Society. A number of our members are or have been caring for loved ones with Parkinson's and have attended that branch. I used to attend the Stratford branch with my husband.

I was delighted when I was contacted earlier this month by one of our members whose husband died two years ago but still finds much of interest and help in our newsletter. She continues to attend the Parkinson's Group, now as a volunteer, and wondered whether their members could be given the opportunity to join our mailing list. As a result, I'm delighted to say that members of the Leamington Branch will be receiving a copy of our newsletter at the same time as their own. I look forward to receiving some feedback from our 'visiting members' so that we can plan how we move forward. Any Parkinson's members who wish to comment directly

to us are welcome to do so via our email address.

In common with so many conditions, Parkinson's is a disease that impacts extensively not only on the patient but on the carer and the rest of the family. It's very important that carers receive sufficient support so I hope this helps.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Carers4Carers' monthly meetings take place on the **fourth** Friday of the month. We meet at the Kineton Village Hall, Mill Street, Kineton, CV35 OLB between 10.30 and 12 noon. In accordance with Government guidelines during the current COVID-19 emergency, we regret that our meetings have been **CANCELLED** until further notice.

Carers 4 Carers is part of the network of Omega Meeting Point Support Groups Reg. Charity No. 1120322

KEEPING IN TOUCH

For quite a number of years businesses have been using online video conferencing to hold their meetings. It saves time and money. I think it started with Skype. My husband used to use it to talk to his daughter living in Italy. Neither the sound nor video quality was brilliant, but it did them both good to see each other.

Since then, the number of platforms offering the ability for several people to hold conversations with video over the internet or phone has proliferated. During this pandemic, now more than ever, this means the ability to do this is really important. Our volunteer team is gradually contacting our members and so many have said it would be really lovely to see each other again. I suspect those of you with internet access and families may already be enjoying making contact with them via Zoom or Skype or Duo etc. However, their use is not restricted to those with internet access; many of them can be used with landlines too, but obviously without the video features. The person arranging the call will probably provide the necessary numbers to ring. So, what is available and how do we get it?

In the notes that follow, by 'device' I mean a mobile smartphone – Apple iPhone or Android (i.e. on a Samsung, Motorola, Huawei etc phone – other makes are available) or a tablet such as an iPad. Many of the apps are already pre-installed on phones or tablets or they can be downloaded through the App Store on an iPhone or iPad, or Google Play on an Android device. By 'computer' I mean a laptop or desktop; most platforms can either be used via a web browser such as Chrome or Edge, or via an app that you can download from the Microsoft Store on Windows or App Store on a Mac.

In such a limited space, it's not possible to give instructions for using everything. Therefore I have added links at the end of each section to provide more information. In this issue we are concentrating on this form of connecting and then next month will look at the various forms of Social Media.



SKYPE

You may find that you already have the Skype app on your device. On a computer, type 'Skype' into the search bar at the bottom left of your screen. There are free apps for iPhone and Android. You can use Skype to talk to someone by phone, video or text message. The app looks different on different devices and computers so to get more help its probably best to go to <https://support.skype.com/en/skype/all/>.



WHATSAPP



WhatsApp is a free app for Android and iPhones. There's also a desktop app so you can sync it with your phone. It uses your internet connection so you can send free texts and voice messages (called "chat") and make free calls (voice and video calls) both within the UK and overseas. You can create groups so messages can be to just one person or up to 256 people at once and can include photos and videos. Calls can be to one person and has just been increased to eight people. <https://www.whatsapp.com/coronavirus/get-started>



ZOOM



To me, this is the new kid on the block although I believe it has been around for some time. It's very easy to use and you don't need to register unless you are the person organising the meeting. You may have heard some unsettling reports recently of criminals hacking into meetings with unpleasant results. Zoom have consequently beefed up their security and brought in a number of sensible measures. This includes unique Meeting IDs, passwords and Waiting Rooms. If you arrive at a meeting early, you won't be let in until the Host is ready for you! That means no nasty interlopers.

Like Skype, you can join meetings by phone, (including landline) video or chat. 'Chat' these days tends to mean short written messages (like text messages) rather actually speaking to someone. You can test it out here: <https://zoom.us/test>

..... and now, after all the heavy stuff, something to make you smile....

A brief poem by Lemn Sissay sent to me by Lisa. If you've not heard of him, as I hadn't, he is an English author and broadcaster. He was the official poet of the 2012 London Olympics and has been Chancellor of the University of Manchester since 2015.

"How do you do it?" said night.
"How do you wake and shine?"
"I keep it simple" said light.
"One day at a time."

One of my husband's favourite little ditties.....

I wish I was a glow worm,
A glow worm's never glum.
"cos how can you be
grumpy
When the sun shines out
your bum!



Do you have all the help you need from local volunteers? Community networks are working well during this emergency and many new friendships are being made. We have lists of available help so if you are stuck, let us know and we'll put you in touch.

Not very good at asking for help? I'm not either but just remember, many volunteers benefit as much from helping you as you do from the help they offer.



OVER TO YOU

As our team of volunteers have been chatting to you on the phone over the last few weeks, we've heard how many of you are finding ways of coping with the isolation and extra time on your hands. We'd love you to share some of your thoughts and strategies so please do send them in or perhaps a favourite picture, poem or story.

Best ways of getting in touch? Either the phone number or the email address at the foot of each page of your newsletter.